

# Agrarianism and Civilisation

## Mr. D. G. M. Jackson's Address at Rural Convention

found in "beautiful new Babylons" rather than in Nazareth, and sneered at the advocates of agrarianism as "medieval romantics." They were neither mediaevalist nor romantic, however; their ideas had been shown as workable in a number of modern, progressive communities (he instanced those of northern Europe) and did not involve the rejection of rational mechanisation. They stood for a belief that had been held by wise men and

nature. Men, however, were only "economically determined" when society ceased to be activated by moral aims.

Agrarian life, he said, was commended as good because it was human, natural and creative, not because it was comfortable — he emphasised, especially, its close contact with nature's cycle, the close associations of family and neighbourhood which it involved, and its advantages from the point of view of nutrition. City life showed itself as unnatural because it was sterile and must draw upon the vitality of the land to survive. It disintegrated the family, and induced artificial birth prevention and moral indiscipline, symptoms of a "laetudium vitae" characteristic of this phase of civilised development. The doom which had fallen on Nineveh and other ancient cities might fall tomorrow on Melbourne and Sydney.



MR. D. G. M. JACKSON, M.A.

able statesmen throughout history—that great cities, and a society of few owners and managers, and many dispossessed were signs of decadence and death. Against them were "Utopian" moderns who dreamed of mechanised supermen, politicians who merely drifted, and rich men whose motives were those of self-interest, and who encouraged belief that their way was an inevitable process of

more profitable. Finally, education in "humanities" tended to yield to the demands of a specialisation which produced abnormal types. The escape from this impasse lay in a restoration of the values and sanctities of agrarian life, bringing man again in contact with the eternal verities of nature, and giving him work and leisure of a human kind. Culture and the arts flowered out of a sane, human way of life "as a song springs to the lips of a happy child"; and national feeling became pure and noble as the love of men for their mothers.

The speaker concluded by saying that to change the outlook of a people—the task before them—involved great spiritual zeal as well as rational practicality. They must live as Christian countrymen, rejecting the easy living and false values of the city, accepting the hardships and labour needed to build a free, Christian society, and loving Christ in their fellow-farmers. If they demanded something like a social miracle, they were only asking what the Holy Father himself was seeking through the power of God manifested in Catholic Action. They believed that the pattern of society was a pattern, not a doom, and that it could be changed, if men had moral energy, into the more human pattern needed, so that Australia might live.

### THE AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL PROBLEM

Mr. Jackson went on to speak of the problem of Australian culture with relation to the land. We suffered, he said, from having our thought "overlaid" by that of the older world, and having a senile social order imposed on our young nation. One of the lies of the promoters of industrial "leisure State" culture was that mass production could be used to "promote" appreciation of great art and creative effort. This could not be so, because its "museum art" was divorced from life, while its segmentation of work and leisure was destructive to the sensitive balance of the human spirit, so that the mass production of bad and sensational stuff would always be

### BABYLON AND THE LAND

The future of the land, in particular, was discussed in purely "economic" terms, with reference to world markets, home food supply and so forth; it was assumed that "primary industries" ought to be regarded like other industries, and "progressive" mechanised methods introduced, so that "power-farming" would produce the supplies needed in the cities and overseas. The speaker referred briefly to the evils resulting from farming conducted in this spirit—the "raping of virgin soil," which had led to exhaustion and erosion. More fundamental, however, was the evil of destruction of a noble, human way of life without whose survival civilisation itself might perish.

Certain modern writers and statesmen would have us believe that the "good life" was to be

## A Dream That Has Come True

### Mr. Santamaria's Inspiring Address



MR. B. A. SANTAMARIA, B.A., LL.B.

"It was a dream which is a dream no longer. For to-day there is no part of this great land where the name of the movement is unknown. The three men who dreamed that dream originally have good reason to be satisfied with the way that dream has become a reality over the past three years. And, yet, it is only the beginning. At the end of 1943 they were entitled to expect a flowering of the full Catholic life, not only in the purely spiritual sense, but in the social sense, the intellectual and the economic sense in all those districts in which the movement is now firmly established.

### MOVEMENT HAS GIVEN A DOCTRINE

"The fact that the movement has been established in so many districts is not the most important thing achieved. What is of fundamental importance is that the movement has given the land a doctrine, in the full sense of the word, and by doing so has raised the fight for the land above the level of party expediency or economic considerations.

"It cannot too often be repeated that the doctrine centres around the ideal of the Independent Family Farm; around the ideal of co-operation as the manifestation of Christian charity in economic life; around the ideal of rural education, not only as a technical training for children, but as a full preparation for life both for children and for adults; around the ideal of revived and flourishing rural homes and communities with the

amenities of the cities and a spirit which the city can never possess. These are the bulwarks which stand unchallengeable as the only avenues to the fruitful husbandry of soil and of families combined with the ideal of personal freedom.

"It is no accident that at a time when the human race has been called upon by the Vicar of Christ to resist the claim of the State to dominate the lives of men and women and children as if they were nothing more than animals, the emphasis should have been placed in this country on rural life as the essential basis of a free civilisation. This is the issue of the modern age and every man who spends himself in the service of the movement is fighting for the ultimate triumph of Christian civilisation.

"Catholic Action is an apostolate. The Rural Movement, behind all its material trappings, has no purpose if it is not Catholic Action in its defined sense. Many speak harsh things of the rural group—tiny, insignificant as it seems before the great national and international problems which confront us. But it is tiny in size and numbers only."

The speaker reminded his listeners that they were the Church Militant! Not the Church apathetic, not the Church timid, not the Church ashamed. They were the Church advancing in battle array to the conquest of the world for Christ.

### THESSALIAN CLUB

St. Vincent's Hospital  
The Thessalians would be delighted to entertain women of the services at afternoon tea on Sunday, March 28, at their home, "Garnet," 42 Princes-street, at the rear of the hospital.

### THE CALENDAR

**SUNDAY, MARCH 21:** 2nd Sunday in Lent. St. Benedict, Abbot. Mass Proper. 2nd prayer, Holy Abbot. Preface of Lent.  
St. Benedict was born at Nursia, in Umbria, in 480. Sent to Rome for his studies, he fled from the world to the solitude of a Subiaco. He attracted crowds by his virtues. The great Roman families sent their children to him; as he soon founded in the mountains twelve monasteries. "Schools for the Lord's service." Uniting manual labour with constant preaching to the pagan population of Monte Cassino, he left to his sons the monastic motto: "Pray and work." St. Benedict died in 543. Among his sons are counted more than 20 Popes.

**MONDAY, 22. Feria.** Mass Proper. 2nd prayer, "Defend us"; 3rd prayer, "For the living and departed." Preface of Lent.

**TUESDAY, 23. Feria.** Mass Proper. 2nd prayer, "Defend us"; 3rd prayer, "For the living and departed." Preface of Lent.

**WEDNESDAY, 24. St. Gabriel, Archangel.** Mass Proper. 2nd prayer, of the Feria. Preface of Lent. Last Gospel of the Feria. OR Mass of the Feria. 2nd prayer, St. Gabriel. Preface of Lent. Last Gospel of the Feria.

St. Gabriel was sent to Daniel to enlighten him as to the time when Christ would be born; and to Zachary, at the hour in which he uttered incense in the temple, to announce to him the birth of John the Baptist, the Precursor of the Messiah. "Only Gabriel," a name that means "Power of God," was found worthy among all the angels," says St. Bernard, "to announce to Mary the designs of God with regard to her, to announce to him the Most High, and which the Church desires us to repeat frequently, he said to her: 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.'"

**THURSDAY, 25. Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.** Mass Proper. 2nd prayer of the Feria. Preface, B.V.M. Last Gospel of the Feria.

**FRIDAY, 26. Feria.** Mass Proper. 2nd prayer, "Deliver us"; 3rd prayer, "For the living and departed." Preface of Lent.

**SATURDAY, 27. St. John Damascene, Confessor, Doctor.** Mass Proper. 2nd prayer of the Saturday. Preface of Lent. Last Gospel of the Saturday. OR Mass of the Saturday. 2nd prayer, Holy Confessor, Doctor. Preface of Lent.

John, surnamed Damascene for a time when the Emperor Leo the Isaurian endeavoured to destroy it. He strongly opposed the iconoclasts. His numerous works, his piety and his eloquence caused him to be compared by the Second Council of Nicea to a "river of gold," and to be proclaimed Doctor by Leo XIII. He died early in the eighth century.

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